

CENTER TO PROTECT WORKERS' RIGHTS

MINORITY WORKER TRAINING PROGRAM

GRANT NUMBER: U45 ES06185-07

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AIMS

The Superfund Jobs Training Initiative currently administered by the Center to Protect Workers' Rights (formerly under the UBC Health & Safety Fund) was implemented in East Palo Alto, California during program year September 1, 1997-August 31, 1998.

In East Palo Alto the infrastructure for the Superfund Jobs Training Initiative at OIC-W already existed. This project dovetailed an environmental worker training demonstration program sponsored by DePaul University and OIC-W by adding the construction skills training component. The demonstration program was highly successful and those involved in the planning process agreed that by providing the construction skills component, the program would be offering greater long-term career opportunities for the program participants.

The composite training goals for the Program were:

recruit and enroll a total of 10 participants, ages 18-25;

- to provide life skills training and supportive services to prepare participants for the world of work
- to provide motivational skills development integrated into a hands-on hazardous waste worker training, confined space and lock-out/tag-out training and certification
- to provide occupational safety and health training in environmental

cleanup for lead-based paint abatement and asbestos-abatement

provide basic carpentry construction skills hands-on training and classroom studies

offer the opportunity for program participants to attend Mission College's

environmental technologies courses

identify potential environmental clean up jobs and place program

graduates

identify potential construction jobs for program participants

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Opportunities Industrialization Center-West, a community-based training center located within the East Palo Alto district, served as the lead agency responsible for implementing this program. The City and the Region IX EPA office organized a coalition of agencies interested in collaborating to train local residents and provide opportunities for those trained to work in the environmental clean up industry. As a result of the partnership formed with the City of East Palo Alto, U.S. EPA Region IX, the San Mateo County Carpenters Union Local 217, DePaul University, the UBC Health & Safety Fund, the Bay Area REBRAC/Mission College, the local Private Industry Council and OIC-W, twenty-two (22) program participants were trained and certified to go to work in the environmental clean up industry. Of that number 8 went to work at hazardous waste sites and 7 went to work in general construction, 2 dropped out and the other 5 needed additional skills training, or seventy-five percent (75%) secured employment.

SIGNIFICANCE

This Superfund Jobs Training Initiative broadened interaction, communication and cooperation among a variety of community organizations. All of whom are concerned with heightened community awareness of environmental hazards and engaging the community residents in the processes involved in assessment, inspections, and clean up. This project served as the catalyst to work more closely with the City of East Palo Alto in its Brownfields initiatives and created a pool

of trained and certified community residents who may have the opportunity to work in the community in which they live.

Additionally, this initiative has yielded greater opportunities for young adult minorities to become aware of environmental hazards within their community. It has also afforded them the appropriate technical skills training to become actively involved in the cleanup and rehabilitation of the environmentally impacted areas of their community.